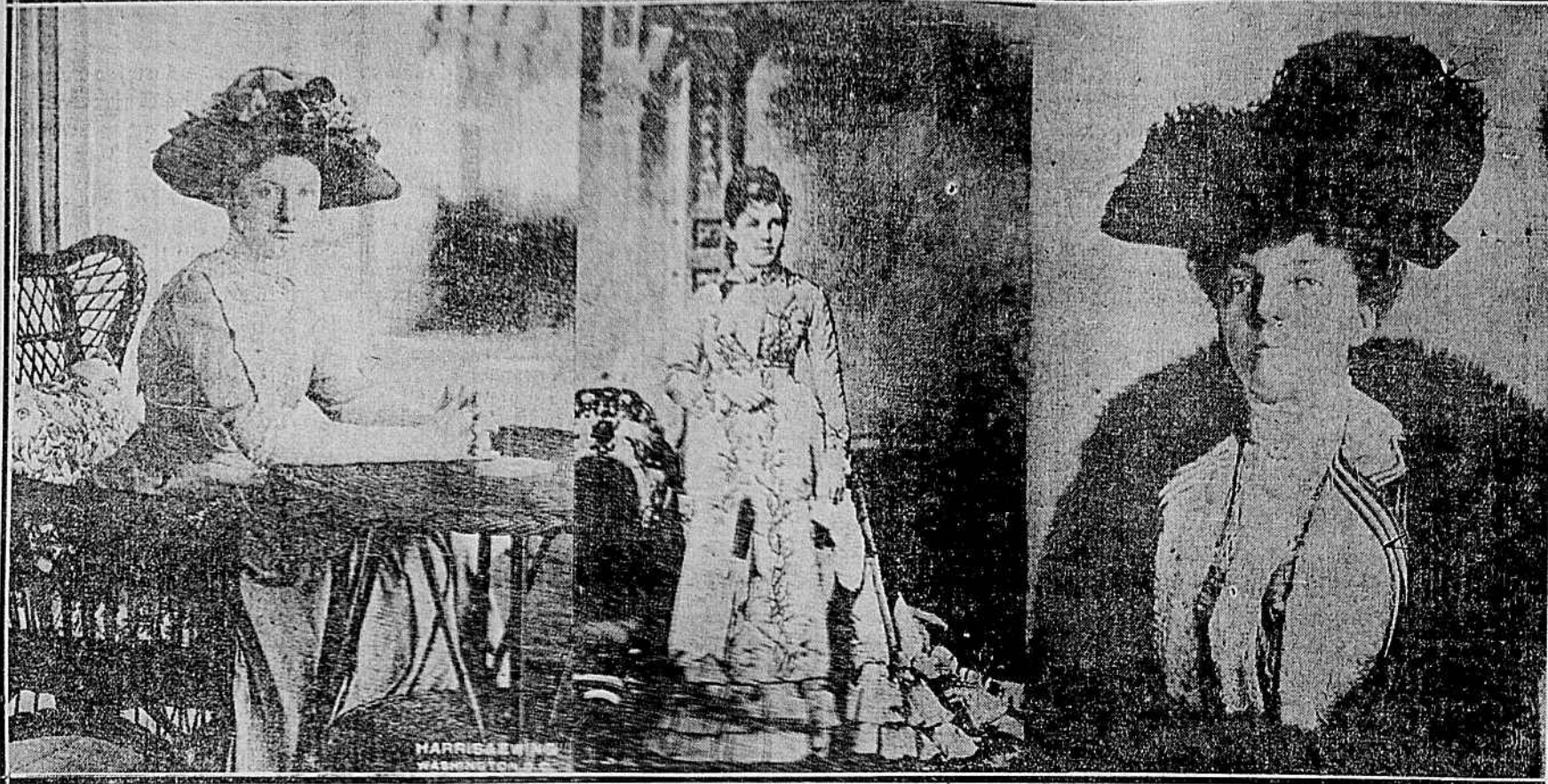


# Miss Taft's Debut---Society Is Preparing for It---President Not Ambitious for Daughter to Marry---Other "American Princesses"



MISS HELEN TAFT.  
(Copyright by Harris & Ewing.)

NELLIE GRANT AS A BRIDE.

ALICE ROOSEVELT AT THE TIME OF HER DEBUT.

BY JOHN ELLFRET WATKINS.  
Washington, D. C.

Miss Taft's coming debut has Vanity Fair all a-flutter. Gladys and Phyllis and the rest of the poor little dears are being fairly fitted to frazzles, while their mammams are everywhere bustling about in the shops, each over such extraordinary provocation for lavish spending.

The beau monde feels relieved that the President's only daughter will now take her rightful place in the centre of the social stage and there assume the stellar role which she has laid aside for the past year. Realizing full well that a President's debutante daughter has everything else being equal—more excellent chances for a brilliant marriage than any other fair maiden of the realm, society cannot understand why Miss Taft has all ready been denied a year of such opportunity. But the President is not anxious to marry off his only daughter, nor does he believe in early marriages.

"I hope that you will not regard matrimony as necessary," he advised a body of schoolgirls some time ago, while on another occasion, after saying that he was glad he had no money to leave his sons, he added:

"But for my daughter I am going to scrape together as much as I can give her and as good an education as I can, so that she shall marry only when she chooses to marry and not because of circumstances. I wish that every woman in the world were so situated that she did not think it was necessary to marry if she did not want to."

## Few Have Had Marriageable Daughters

Although he is the twenty-sixth President to hold office, Mr. Taft is only the sixth to be possessed of a marriageable daughter during his administration. Seven of his predecessors—Washington, Madison, Jackson, Polk, Pierce, Buchanan and McKinley—were childless. Presidents, Buchanan being a bachelor, while Pierce and McKinley lost all of their children by death prior to entering office.

There were sons, but no daughters, to share the social prestige of the White House with Quincy Adams, Van Buren, the first Harrison and Lincoln.

Then there were John Adams, Jefferson, Taylor, Johnson and Benjamin Harrison, all of whose daughters had married before having a chance to make a White House debut, and these four Presidents, directly succeeding one another—Hayes, Garfield, Arthur and Cleveland—whose daughters were all mere children.

Roosevelts Break the Record.

The only President to present two unmarried daughters to society was Theodore Roosevelt, and both of them were under eighteen when they made their debuts, whereas Miss Taft is now nineteen. When Colonel Roosevelt unexpectedly assumed office it was announced that his eldest daughter was a child, so society counted little on knowing her for several years. She had been in the White House only a few months, however, when, at the beginning of the first social season under the Roosevelt regime, the young belle was formally presented at a grand ball held in the east room January 3, 1902.

With the exception of the members of the Cabinet and relatives of the Roosevelts, the 700 invitations were issued to young people, there being three times as many beaux as belles present, this being arranged so that every young woman might be assured of a partner for each dance. The great

east room, where James and Dolly Madison led their stately minuets, was stripped of its heavy carpet and covered with waxed linen crash. The guests, who had been invited at 10 o'clock, filed into the historic ballroom after being received in the blue parlor by Miss Roosevelt and her mother. At 11 o'clock the full Marine Band struck up a waltz, "The Debutante," the first on a program of twenty numbers, and shortly after midnight a buffet supper was held in the old state dining-room.

Six weeks later Miss Alice Roosevelt celebrated her eighteenth birthday, but had she postponed her debut until then, Lent would have been close upon her, and the heart of the social season would have been missed.

Her Triumphal Reign Begins.

As it was, she was asked only a few weeks later to christen the Kaiser's yacht, which she did that same winter, receiving from Prince Henry the Emperor's token of thanks, a golden bracelet bearing the royal portrait, studded with diamonds. Indeed, from the moment of her debut "Princess Alice," as this popular and spirited girl was called, enjoyed a round of gaiety such as no other American girl has ever shared. The most costly balls in the annals of social history were given in her honor, among these the famous \$75,000 cotillion by Lieutenant Stirling Clarke, stepson of Bishop Potter, where the favors were all of gold and jewels, while the supper was prepared by the most famous chefs of New York and conveyed to Washington on a special train. One newspaper published statistics stating that in the first fifteen months of her social career, Miss Alice had attended 350 balls, 400 dinners, 300 parties and 650 afternoon teas, at which she had shaken hands with 32,000 people. Within the same time she had paid 1,760 calls. At the end of the fourth season she sailed with Secretary Taft on the famous tour of Hawaii, Japan and the Philippines, from which she returned with twenty-three cases of presents, on which she had to pay a duty of \$1,206. But it was on this tour that the most famous of all daughters of the White House abdicated her belatedness and promised to become the wife of Nicholas Longworth, the young millionaire Representative from Cincinnati, whom she married five days after her twenty-second birthday, her reign in the White House having lasted four years, one month and fifteen days.

Little Princess Ethel.

When she was married the east room her half-sister Ethel was only fourteen. Indeed, Miss Ethel did not reach her seventeenth birthday until the summer of Mr. Taft's nomination to succeed her father. So in her case, as in that of her sister Alice, a debut had to be arranged before her eighteenth birthday. So she reigned in the White House for just one brief season, that falling between Mr. Taft's election and his inauguration. She and Miss Helen Herron Taft, her successor, were about the same age, had been schoolmates in the same class when joining the Episcopal Church.

No White House Belle in Twenty-Eight Years.

The White House had been twenty-eight years without a daughter of

marriageable age, when the popular Alice Roosevelt made her famous debut, her direct predecessor having been Nellie Grant.

This White House belle of a generation ago was kept in school for the first three years of her father's eight years in the White House. Then she made her debut at a reception which her mother, a strict Methodist, deemed a more suitable entertainment than a ball for the young people of their daughter's age.

Like her successor, the "Princess Alice," Miss Grant was destined to leave heart while crossing the ocean. While coming over on the "Russia," after a European tour, late in 1872, she met Algernon Sartoris, a grandson of Charles Kemble, the actor, and the nephew of Fanny Kemble, the celebrated actress. A year and a half later—May 21, 1874—when she was only nineteen and he twenty-three, they were married in the east room, in the presence of 200 guests, including the Cabinet families and the high officers of the army, navy and diplomatic corps, and in their brilliant uniforms. President and Mrs. Grant went over the New York to see their only daughter sail for her new home in England, whence she was to return, before many years, a widow.

A Schoolmarm Princess.

Another generation had almost reached the time of the previous White House daughter of marriageable age—the studious Mary Fillmore, whose father

was suddenly called in the summer of 1850 to succeed President Taylor. She, like Nellie Grant and Helen Taft, was an only daughter. Having graduated at a finishing school at Lenox, Mass., she had entered the New York State Normal School while her father was Vice-President, and when General Taylor's death occurred she had scarcely completed the course which was to qualify her as a teacher.

A rather stupid time of it for a girl of only eighteen poor Mary Fillmore seems to have had when she first came to live at the White House. To begin with, the family was in mourning for an aunt. Then her mother fell into poor health, and there was little gaiety around the old mansion during the time that this girl lived there. It is recalled that she gave delightful musicals; that she played on the piano, harp and the guitar; also that—like Miss Taft and Miss Ethel Roosevelt—she conversed fluently in French, German and Spanish. But there is no record of her having ever been presented formally to society.

Her mother was one of the many inauguration day victims of history. She caught cold on the day when Franklin Pierce succeeded her husband, and she died within the month. Then, a little more than a year later, and when she was only twenty-two, Mary Fillmore followed her mother to the grave, having been stricken with cholera while on a visit to her grandfather.

A much gayer time had been enjoyed by pretty Elizabeth Tyler, the White House belle, who reigned before Mary Fillmore. She was one of four sisters, two married and the other a child; and when their father succeeded to the presidency he called them all together for a bit of a sermon.

Love Is Heaven, Love Is Love.

"Remember, you will be much in the public eye," he warned. "You are to know no favorites, the United States, and as such are all to be received with equal courtesy. You will not receive any gifts whatever, and you will allow no one to approach you on the subject of office or favors."

Miss Tyler was the beauty of the family. She had fine eyes, an exquisite complexion, a wealth of soft, waving hair, and all of the superior charm of a Virginia belle. But her reign in Washington was destined to be very brief. Her father had become President in April, 1841, and on the last day of the following January she married in the east room William Waller, of Virginia, a grandnephew of the Scottish Earl of Traquair.

Lizzie had had quite a grand wedding, although the intention was that it should be quiet and private," wrote her brother's wife, who added that the bride "looked surpassingly lovely in her wedding dress and long blonde lace veil; her face literally covered with blushes and dimples." This relation writes also that the fair Elizabeth "behaved remarkably well, too."

"Love is Heaven, Love is Love."

One of the bridesmaids expressed to Daniel Webster her surprise that "Lizzie" should have consented to give up her belatedness so soon.

"Ah," said that great man—"Love ruled the court, the camp, the grave."

And love is heaven, and heaven is

love!"

Among the other guests at this wedding were the Cabinet, diplomatic corps and a host of personal friends, including the brilliant Dolly Madison herself.

The first daughter of a President to be presented to society at the White House was youthful Maria Monroe who, although only fourteen when her father became President, improved her time in the White House to the extent of being wooed, won and wedded before she was eighteen. It was in March, 1820, just three years after her father had entered upon his first term, when pretty Maria set the precedent for east room weddings, the groom being her cousin, Samuel Gouverneur, of New York.

Were Married "New York Style."

They were married "New York style," according to chroniclers of the event. The ceremony was witnessed by only the attendants, relatives and a few old friends. Then the bridesmaids were dismissed until exactly a week after, when they assisted the bride at a brilliant reception given in the White House and during which President and Mrs. Monroe mingled with their guests.

SCROFULA  
HEREDITARY BLOOD POISON

Scrofula is a disease manifested usually by a swelling and ulceration of the glands, especially about the neck. It is almost entirely hereditary in its origin, being the dregs or remains of some specific blood poison. Where the blood is greatly weakened with the scrofulous poison, the disease attacks other portions of the system besides the glands, and then we see its effects in weak eyes, poorly developed bodies, running sores and ulcers, skin diseases, especially on the scalp, catarrhal troubles, etc. Scrofula usually makes its appearance in childhood, though manhood or womanhood may be reached before the poison progresses to the stage of outward manifestation. S. S. S. is the one real cure for Scrofula. It is a blood purifier without an equal, and it cures this destructive blood poison by removing every trace of the infection from the circulation. S. S. S., in addition to cleansing and purifying the blood, assists the stomach and digestive members in the creation of new blood corpuscles and other nourishing matter for the circulation. S. S. S. increases the resistive powers of the system and by strengthening and building up the vitality, allows nature to make a perfect and lasting cure. Book describing the disease and any medical advice sent free to all who write.

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and left the bridal couple to act as host and hostess.

A brilliant ball was given to this first White House bride by Commodore Decatur just two days before he fought the fatal duel with Barron, and Commodore Porter had cards out for another ball arranged in her honor, when the Decatur tragedy ended all further festivity of the season. So the couple went on to New York to set up housekeeping in the home which they shared with their distinguished parent after he left the White House and fell into poverty.

Two other belles of presidential households were General Washington's adopted daughter, Eleanor Custis, and President Buchanan's niece, Harriet Lane. "Nelly" Custis (who was Mrs. Washington's granddaughter, by her first marriage was never a White House belle, for the simple reason that the Washingtons never lived in that mansion. She left her finishing school in Annapolis, Md., after the capital was established at Philadelphia, and when the first President took up his abode in his "small brick house next door to a haldresser," his foster daughter began her social reign under that roof. It is said that the general often left his studies in the provisional executive mansion to enjoy the society of Nelly and her young friends, with whom he sometimes danced the Virginia reel. But the social reign of this first "American princess" was cut short by her marriage before she was twenty to President Washington's nephew, Lawrence Lewis.

Wouldn't Let the Prince Dance.

Of all White House belles, she who had the greatest social responsibilities was Miss Harriet Lane, the wealthy orphaned niece of President Buchanan, who made her home with him when he was President. While living with him in London she became a favorite at court, and while presiding over the White House in 1860, she acted as hostess to the young Prince of Wales (afterward Edward VII.) during his five-day stay under President Buchanan's provisional rule. The prince several times suggested a dance during his visit, but the bachelor President forbade such diversion on the ground that many good people would regard it as "profane gaiety in the saloons of the state," all of which must have bored the royal visitor exceedingly. However, he managed at last to get his dance with Miss Lane and her girl friends, the deck of the Mount Vernon being cleared for that purpose. After returning to London the future King of England sent his former hostess a set of engravings of the royal family. Five years after leaving the White House she married Henry Elliott Johnston, of Baltimore.

White House Girls Still Living.

All of these former White House belles are now dead. Save, of course, the Roosevelt girls and Nellie Grant. But we still have with us quite a number of the little American "princesses" who once were White House girls, although too young to make their debuts in that historic mansion. Father and

Marion Cleveland have lately been

completing their educations abroad; Ellen ("Nelly") Herndon Arthur was married seven years ago to Charles A. Pinkerton, and with her husband holds a high position in New York society; "Molly" Garfield after leaving the White House was sent away to a finishing school, and then married Stanley Brown, her father's private secretary. They make their home in Washington. And Fanny Hayes several years after her father left the White House married Ensign Harry Eaton Smith, U. S. N., who for the past seven years has been a professor of mathematics in the Naval Academy. They live most of the year at Annapolis. (Copyright, 1910, by John Ellfret Watkins.)

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No White House Belle in Twenty-Eight Years.

The White House had been twenty-eight years without a daughter of

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